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Centre scraps age limit for NEET-UG

The National Medical Commission has removed the upper age limit for those appearing in NEET-Under Graduate 2022 exam, officials said on Wednesday. The upper age cap fixed by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) in 2017 was 25 years for unreserved candidates and 30 years for reserved candidates.

Putin is expected to announce Moscow's retaliatory steps against sanctions today

Russia vows to hit back over oil ban

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

A day after the US announced an immediate ban on Russian oil and other energy imports, Moscow accused Washington of declaring an economic war on it and vowed to retaliate against the "hostile bacchanalia". Russia is expected make an announcement on Thursday after a crucial meeting between President Vladimir Putin and senior government officials to take stock of the impact of sanctions on the country.

Musicians perform at the Independence Square in Kyiv on Wednesday | AFP

With Russia and Ukraine holding on to the ceasefire, the window for more humanitarian corridors to evacuate frightened people opened but new concerns also emerged. Ukraine said power has been cut to Chernobyl, site of the world's worst nuclear disaster in 1986. However, no radiation leakage was reported.

On Wednesday, Ukraine accused Russia of bombing a maternity hospital in Mariupol. The attack injured 17 people while many more are feared buried under rubble, said local officials. Russia, however, denied targeting the hospital.

As for Kyiv, a fierce battle may be in the offing with Russian troops closing in and armed residents vowing to defend it. A Russian military column has reached a village on the outskirts of the capital, AFP reported. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said efforts are on to evacuate 18,000 people from the city. Zelenskyy, who reportedly offered to drop the plan to join NATO in a bid to placate Moscow, hardened his posture on Wednesday. "We will not surrender... will fight until we can win back our land. You can still save yourselves if you just go home," he said in Russian language.

Meanwhile, Poland offered to supply Ukraine with fighter jets via US-led NATO, but Washington rejected it. P9,12

EXPRESS READ

Karnataka to approach CJI over water projects

Bengaluru: Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister J C Madhuswamy on Wednesday reiterated that the State Government has objected to river-linking projects in toto as the state will lose its share of water. "As two of the judges did not admit our case, we are likely to approach the registrar of the Supreme Court and in turn, the Chief Justice," he said. P4

NEET, HIJAB ROW DOMINATE DAY 2

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

POWER-PACKED speeches keeping attendees on the edge of their seats marked Day Two of the 10th edition of the ThinkEdu Conclave, organised by *TNIE*, on Wednesday. It began with the Kerala Governor's address, and concluded with the gritty and graceful story of motivational speaker Malvika Iyer.

"There is no (hijab) controversy; this is a conspiracy," said Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan, while inaugurating the second day of the conclave. The event, which went hybrid this year, was a huge success with over 200 participants joining online and 359 students and delegates attending in person.

Like the first day, which saw eloquent speakers debating passionately to the bell, the second day of the conclave witnessed many a heated discussion. While Tamil Nadu Finance Minister Dr Palanivel Thiaga Rajan, during a panel discussion with former Planning Commission chairman Dr Montek Singh Ahluwalia, said all the State wants is fairness, predictability, and a good partnership with the Centre. Chief Economic Advisor Dr V Anantha Nageswaran said the situation in war-torn Ukraine has worsened the economic crisis India was just recuperating from.

Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan inaugurates Day Two of the ThinkEdu Conclave in the presence of *TNIE* Editorial Director Prabhu Chawla, on Wednesday | ASHWIN PRASATH

After DMK's Dr K Ponmudy bashed the idea of an exam like NEET on Day One, Congress MP Manish Tewari, on Day Two, said ever since NEET was introduced, private medical college fees have gone up six times. Not just politicians, but stalwart business personalities such as Gautam Adani and Tata Steel's TV Narendran joined the conclave virtually.

Educators and thinkers like AICTE chairman Dr Anil Sahasrabudhe, JNU V-C Dr Santishree D Pandit and PM's Economic Advisory Council chairman Bibek Debroy also graced the event.

FULL COVERAGE: P5,13,18

Parleys, resort politics in Goa

With hours to go before the Assembly election results are announced, political parties in Goa have moved their candidates to resorts and other safe locations. A Congress team headed by P Chidambaram, DK Shivakumar, Satish Jarkiholi, Dinesh Gundurao and Sunil Kedar is in Goa to strategise the party's next move. Meanwhile, BJP leaders, including, party's Goa desk in-charge CT Ravi, held a meeting with party candidates on Wednesday. P4

Poaching headache ahead of poll results

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi/Lucknow/Panaji

WITH results of Assembly elections to five states set to be out on Thursday, parties are preparing to deal with various post-poll scenarios, including possible poaching attempts by rivals.

In Goa, the Congress has moved all its 37 candidates to an undisclosed location in the state's south. The party has charged the president of its Karnataka unit, DK Shivakumar, to ensure that all its elected members stay united and in one place. "We have learned a lot from the 2017 fiasco. We do not want to repeat it. We wanted to be doubly sure, therefore, all precautionary measures have been taken by shifting all 37 candidates to a resort. Their location has not been shared with anyone," said a senior Congress leader. "All candidates will stay together in the common venue in the spirit of camaraderie and ward off the dirty politics of the BJP," he said.

In Uttarakhand, the ruling BJP began fielding its leaders to deal with a situation wherein the party is short of majority. Meanwhile, the Congress has sent a dozen leaders to counter any attempts by the saffron camp to poach its MLAs as well as independent candidates. "We are ready to counter any mischievous move by the BJP," a Congress leader said.

In Uttar Pradesh, three officials were removed from election duty on Wednesday, a day after the Samajwadi Party alleged electronic voting machines were being shifted in an unauthorised manner.

SP chief Akhilesh Yadav shot off a letter to the Election Commission seeking webcasting of the counting process. P10

SC grants bail to Perarivalan

The Supreme Court on Wednesday granted bail to AG Perarivalan who has been serving life sentence in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case. The court took note of the submission that he has been in jail for more than 30 years and his conduct in the prison. P5

Passenger of stalled train run over by Shatabdi Exp

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

A 24-year-old call centre employee, who had trespassed on the railway tracks near Tyakal station in Kolar, about 60 km from Bengaluru, was run over by a speeding Shatabdi Express heading to Chennai at 8.38 am on Wednesday. The incident was a tragic outcome of power failure which had resulted in some electric trains being stalled.

The Kolar-Bengaluru Cantonment DEMU, in which Shabaz Ahmad Sharif was travelling, had halted on the tracks, like many other trains across the city since 5.12 am, and he was standing on the adjoining track along with countless other passengers. The Marikuppam-KSR Bengaluru MEMU was also stranded on another track since 7.25 am. P5

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Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

21st ANNUAL CONVOCATION

President

Shri. Thaawarchand Gehlot
Hon'ble Governor of Karnataka and Chancellor of the University

Chief Guest and Convocation Address

Shri. Om Birla
Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha

Guest of Honour

Dr. C. N. Ashwath Narayan
Hon'ble Minister for Higher Education, IT & BT, Science & Technology, Skill Development & Livelihood, Govt. of Karnataka and Pro-Chancellor of the University

Confering of "Doctor of Science" (Honoris Causa) Degree to

Shri. Senapathy Kris Gopalakrishnan
Padma Bhushan Awardee,
Co-founder, Infosys and Chairman, Axilor Ventures, Bengaluru.

Dr. Krishna Ella
Padma Bhushan Awardee, Chairman & Managing Director, Bharat Biotech Int. Ltd., Hyderabad

Prof. Rohini M. Godbole
Padma Shri Awardee, Honorary Professor, CHEP, Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru

Date : 10-03-2022 at 11:30 AM
Venue : Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Auditorium "Jnana Sangama", VTU, Belagavi

Congratulations to all the Degree Holders

Prof. Rangaswamy B. E.
Registrar (Evaluation)

Prof. Anand S. Deshpande
Registrar

Prof. Karisiddappa
Vice Chancellor

and all the Members of Executive Council and Academic Senate of VTU

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